

church holds the first place. The body of the church was restored by Messrs. Burn and Brice, about eight years ago, but the tower, of early date, is in a miserable state of ruin. It is understood to be waiting the paternal care of the Woods and Forests, who have the maintenance of it; but it cannot afford to wait much longer.*

THE FALL OF THE SUGAR-HOUSE AT GLASGOW.

THE cause of the recent accident in Alston-street, Glasgow—the fall of the sugar-house—will probably remain for ever in obscurity. The building was some seven stories high; and the whole of it fell, excepting the two end or gable walls. The whole interior had been renewed some five or six years ago, but not the walls, although they seem not to have been considered of a perfectly substantial kind. Perhaps an approximate to the truth is, that, in point of strength, the building had never been well calculated for the duty it had to perform; that its equipoise had been all but destroyed by the clearance made in some parts, and more close stowage in others, for the reception of a large addition to its heavy contents, which was immediately expected; and that the commencement of operations on the Monday morning, with the vibration caused by the machinery, were all that were wanted to completely destroy the balance, already tottering. It is said to have borne greater loads than that at the time of the accident; but the distribution of the load is important, as well as its weight.

This accident is full of suggestive interest, as regards the construction of buildings intended for the reception of weighty commodities: in particular, it directs attention to four things:—

1st. That rubble stone building is altogether unsuitable for such purposes; seeing that it only occupies an intermediate position, as regards strength, between building with houlders and building with stones wholly flat-bedded; and must, therefore, in some measure, be dependent for its stability on the cohesive property of the mortar.

2nd. That the walls of lofty storehouses should not be—as they usually are, in Glasgow—built of one uniform thickness from the ground to the summit; for the higher they go they have the less to sustain; and at the same time the upper becomes the greater load upon the lower portions, which may frequently, where the goods stored and machinery employed are of a very heavy description, be nigh crushing under the pressure.

3rd. That the well-known most active agents for producing decomposition in timber—heat and moisture combined—render vigilance essential in such buildings as the one referred to, where the floors are at once subject to these injurious influences, and loaded sufficiently to test their strength in their best condition. The impossibility of getting timbers “thoroughly seasoned and perfectly dry” is conclusive against the practice here of inserting the ends of all beams and joists into the solid walls, where their internal moisture is prevented escaping by the pores, and must, therefore, engender incipient decay.

4th. That care should be taken to ascertain that the hollow in the cast-iron pillars employed is perfectly concentric with the exterior; for it frequently happens that it is far from being so, and the greatest danger may impend where there seems perfect security. The new invention of casting pillars and pipes in a vertical instead of oblique mould seems well worthy of attention, both on this account and the more uniform density of the metal. All round which it is likely to afford.

JAMES WYLBON.

* Making some inquiry concerning the stone of the district, Mr. James Burns-Lane, a young architect of the town, to whom, by the way, the Rennie medal is to be presented at the Institute on Monday, for the best design for public baths, informed us that the Mylnefield or Kingswood quarry, 4 miles west from Dundee, close on the Tay (which facilitates shipment), produces excellent liver rock of a greyish colour,—price in the quarry about 1s. per cubic foot. The Loches quarries, 3 miles N.W. from Dundee, produce rock of reddish and bluish colours,—price about 9d.—All the Forfarshire stones are hard in comparison with Fifeshire and Glasgow stones.

ANOTHER LANCE FOR THE OLD MASTERS.

SIR,—I regret that, owing to a temporary absence from home, I did not sooner see the remarks of “An Artist” in your number of the 4th inst. I should have certainly replied to them in your next publication, which I am now unable to do. This, however, may be counterbalanced by the opportunity, with which, I trust, your kindness will indulge me, of a full rejoinder. I am unwilling to have the character of pertinacity assigned to me, but I feel it impossible to submit, unanswering, to the misrepresentation of your correspondent—a misrepresentation, I must add, not the less real because, I am sure, from the tone that the gentleman adopts, it must on his part be entirely unintentional.

I am assumed to be the opponent of Mr. Cave Thomas, and the decrifier of modern art. I should be truly sorry to appear in either character. I admire the philosophical spirit of the lectures; and esteem any individual who argues upon art, in the spirit of enlightened criticism, with the view of probing its first principles, and eliciting its power as a moral agent—a true public benefactor. I fully acknowledge also, that, in regard to many branches of the arts, we have men who not only equal but excel the ancients. I have ventured, however, to assume that the results of experience may be at least of some value, and that it is unwise to neglect them. As a proof of the estimation in which we ought to hold them, I have quoted the dicta of Reynolds,—an antiquated authority, perhaps, in the eyes of your correspondent, but one whose works, as I heard Sir Martin Shee pronounce at a dinner within the walls of the Royal Academy, hold, upon the whole, in the English school, a proud and unqualified pre-eminence. And when I speak of the National Gallery as superior to the Royal Academy, I do so in no depreciatory spirit, but merely as arguing from an acknowledged fact, which I do not understand “An Artist” himself to dispute; that the moderns have in their predecessors’ works, a fund of useful knowledge, from which they may gather both valuable hints and bright examples. The better, however, to make my position understood, I will state the two points in which I think Mr. Cave Thomas has departed from that safe line of moderation,—that *via media*, which is alone likely to create public respect for his authority.

1. From his inculcation of the study of “nature,” without qualification or reserve, resting upon a supposed “dictum” of Mr. Burke’s, that “art cannot give rules to or be founded on art,” but which I have endeavoured to shew that Mr. Burke used in a very qualified sense, he would lead the reader to imagine that he values at a very low estimate the results of experience, and considers the study of antiquity more likely to cramp than to develop true genius. These broad assertions, and sweeping conclusions, I have endeavoured rather to qualify than to contradict, by observing that the study of antiquity, properly undertaken, does not preclude, but rather assists, the study of nature; and that it is to this double course of training—this reliance upon a twofold course of education, rather than to a cold and intellectual study of nature’s laws alone,—that the accomplished artist—be he architect, sculptor, or painter—is likely to owe the happiest results. Just as literature and classical taste have ever been held to go hand in hand with knowledge and the sterner investigation of truth, in forming and moulding the ideal of a perfectly well-educated mind,—so in any attempt to sketch the qualifications of the artist, we ought not to confine ourselves to one branch of his profession alone—to tell him, for instance, that it is his duty to give us nature, simple truth. No; he should give us nature in her most agreeable garb, and truth in such a manner as may powerfully influence both our hearts and minds,—not a mere copy of any indifferent sample, but a noble attempt to attain to the highest perfection. I am extremely happy to add, that this appears to me the line you inculcate in your journal; where I see brought forward, not only examples from the book of nature, but enlightened criticisms upon the best works both of modern and ancient art.

In natural accordance with this one-sided view of the question, Mr. Cave Thomas

seemed to me to imagine that the study of antiquity was a waste of time, and the sums laid out upon ancient pictures a waste of cash. He broached in no measured terms the maxim of the political economist, that a supply would ever meet the demand, and advocated the withdrawal of those sums which have hitherto been expended on ancient classical works of art, for the purpose of encouraging the artists of our own day. To this I ventured to make reply, that in accordance with him I would willingly see the sums expended upon art increase, but that I held the love of antiquity, *per se*, to be so important, and the Italian school of painting in particular, to contain so much worthy of imitation, that I should most unwillingly see the public taste withdrawn from these “old paths,” and that if it were so modern art itself would, I thought, be the first to suffer. I pointed out that in some particulars, as I conceived, the public taste for antiquity might take a higher direction. In this Mr. Cave Thomas and myself are, I fancy, agreed; but I must repeat it again and again, that my simple position has been directed to this object alone, “to vindicate the claims of an enlightened experience.” Those who think that antiquity can afford no examples either of enlightenment or skill, are persons who can afford me a satisfactory and intelligible reply. Others can scarcely do so without being inconsistent.

And here I must retort, upon those who accuse me of inconsistency, the same charge. I am told by “An Artist” that Overbeck was one who, to attain a like perfection with Raffaele, reverted to the works of his predecessors, because in their less sophisticated designs he found a powerful antidote to the false taste and pseudo-classical style everywhere prevalent. This being accomplished, he went to nature. What, I ask, is this but an appeal to antiquity? Oh, it may be replied, he now relies solely on nature. Well, sir, have I ever advocated a neglect of nature? far from it, indeed. But I would ask any candid critic whether the seal and impress of his earlier studies does not remain indelibly stamped upon the works of Overbeck himself, and bear its fruit in a close, and to me, I own, somewhat servile and painful imitation of the works of the very early masters. The early masters, I am told again, are not to be admired, unless I choose to forswear all love for the great names which have illustrated the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but I have yet to learn by what iron despotism of taste I am to be prevented from admiring different masters for qualities totally different. May I not go as a pilgrim to Pisa, and meditate in the campo santo on the profound feeling and deep pathos of the early schools, without disqualifying myself for a visit to the Sistina Cappella and the glorious treasures of Venice. Does not art contain two great divisions:—the execution and the spirit. May not the execution, as in the case of the Flemish schools (those followers of nature?), be exquisite and almost faultless, and the spirit be mean and ignoble; while, in the early schools of Italy, we find the exact contradictory (to use a logical term) of this—a spirit of fervid piety and holiness, which nothing at the present day can approach, but an execution in a thousand particulars faulty and imperfect. On looking to execution, may not execution again be divided into three main divisions,—to wit: form, or drawing, a knowledge of light or shadow, or effect, and colour? Now, it is scarcely to be expected that the same artist should excel in these three departments. May I not, then, without an imputation of inconsistency, praise Raffaele and Michelangelo for their grand forms and noble composition? may I not admire Tintoretto and Rubens for their knowledge of light and shadow; and Titian or Guercino, or Rubens (here also truly great), or Paolo Veronese, for their gorgeous and effective colouring. May I not, or rather ought I not, to admire, follow, and imitate every mind which, by its originality, greatness, and masculine vigour of thought, shews itself one of those intellects which the Creator has destined to be truly leading stars in that multitude of beings with whom he has adorned the civilized world. I can conceive, indeed, that if I were, from a false notion of consistency, to limit myself to one school alone, I might incur many of those dangers